

New U.S. Law Makes Voting Easier for Americans Abroad

This coming November, U.S. voters will elect 39 U.S. Senators and the entire House of Representatives. For overseas voters, the absentee voting process will be much easier, thanks in large part to a new law - the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act - that the U.S. Congress enacted last year.

To vote absentee, U.S. citizens living overseas must be registered to vote, and must request an absentee ballot. You can accomplish both tasks by completing a Federally-issued combination voter registration application and absentee ballot request form known as the Federal Post Card Application, or FPCA. This form, along with State-by-State instructions, is available on the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at www.fvap.gov, or from the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, U.S. Consulates in Istanbul and Adana, or Izmir Consular Agency.

The new law gives U.S. citizens overseas the ability to request and receive absentee ballots electronically. Just send in a new FPCA with your email and/or complete fax number clearly written out. U.S. citizens who have changed their names, addresses, or email addresses, or who are infrequent voters, should also submit a new FPCA.

Be sure to follow your State's instructions carefully when completing the form and sending it to local election officials in the United States. Both the FVAP website and the Overseas Vote Foundation website, www.ovf.org, have wizards that assist you in completing and addressing the FPCA. You can also write to the Consulate at VoteAnkara@state.gov, VoteIstanbul@state.gov or VoteAdana@state.gov for assistance.

If you do not receive your absentee ballot after sending in your FPCA within a reasonable time period, notify your local election officials by phone or email. You can also use the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) as a back-up emergency ballot. Check the www.FVAP.gov website.